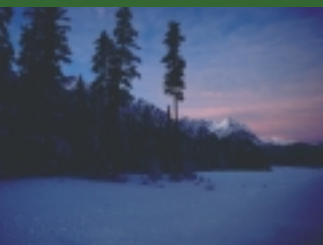




# Environmental Management Systems:



## EPA REGION 8 PILOT PROJECT



### *Getting Started: Forming a Team and Developing an Environmental Policy*

#### FORMING A TEAM

The first step EPA Region 8 took when it began development of its environmental management system (EMS) in late 2001 was to form a team. Because of the wide scale interest in being part of the EMS development, and because the regional leaders wanted to include representatives from each division and major office within the region, the team became quite large—with a total of 17 managers and staff included. One person from the team volunteered to serve as the team leader, and two senior managers were assigned as “EMS Champions” to review the team’s work at various decision points and bring issues to the full Senior Leadership Team for buy-in, as necessary.

Based in its experience forming a team, Region 8 offers the following lessons learned to other organizations that decide to use a team approach to implement an EMS:



EPA Region 8 EMS Team

- Designate a team leader through at least one EMS cycle.
- Include EMS duties as critical job elements in performance agreements with team members.
- Hold weekly meetings in the beginning of the process to accelerate progress on development of the EMS.
- Train team members on EMS and sustainability.
- Ensure that team members are talking to the managers and staff they represent.
- Brief EMS Champions regularly, not just when problems occur.

#### DEVELOPING AN ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

One of the team’s first and most important jobs was to develop a set of guiding principles to serve as the interim Region 8 Environmental Policy. At the time, a national EPA policy on EMS had been drafted but not signed.

The team began by brainstorming a number of ideas that could serve as the focus for the principles. After several discussions, the team agreed unanimously to focus the principles on the concept of *sustainability*. The group acknowledged that this term was difficult to define, and therefore spent time researching definitions and phrases to capture what sustainability really meant.

The team wanted to develop a set of principles that were specific enough to guide employee action, yet encompassing



## ABOUT EPA REGION 8

EPA Region 8 includes the states of Colorado, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, and Wyoming. EPA Region 8’s EMS covers the regional office located in Denver, Colorado; the regional laboratory located in Golden, Colorado; and the Montana operations office in Helena. In all, the EMS covers 626 employees and 115 Senior Environmental Employees.

Per EPA’s national EMS policy, Region 8’s EMS focuses on its internal operations, which include, but are not limited to: purchasing and contracting, running a business office, operating a laboratory, managing facilities, renovating workspace, commuting to work, operating a vehicle fleet, traveling, holding meetings and conferences, and using water and energy. These activities result in hundreds of actions and decisions that affect the environment.

EPA EMS Requirements: 5 Phases

1. Environmental Policy
2. Planning
3. Implementation & Operations
4. Checking & Corrective Action
5. Management Review

For More Information about EPA’s National EMS Policy, visit <http://www.epa.gov/ems/policy/index.htm>.

## REGION 8 EMS GUIDING PRINCIPLES

EPA Region 8 employees commit to integrate environmental considerations into the way we operate our offices. We will work toward sustainability by:

- Reducing our use of natural resources and dependence on materials extracted from the Earth. We will move toward operations based on renewable energy and materials.
- Reducing purchases, use, and releases of man-made toxic substances.
- Ensuring that our decisions and actions protect all communities and people, regardless of location, income, or race.
- Increasing staff knowledge about EMS and becoming effective EMS advocates for others.

## PHASE 1 TIMELINE OF EVENTS

**JANUARY 2002:** Region 8 Team started developing guiding principles.

**MAY 2002:** Region 8 Senior Leadership Team EMS Champions approved the guiding principles.

**MAY 2002:** National EPA EMS policy was signed.

**MAY 2002:** EMS training for regional managers was held.

enough to include all of the region's activities. Several times, team members asked fellow employees to review draft wording to see if they understood what it said, if they could support the statements, and if they would follow them. This feedback was critical to the development of principles that would be meaningful to the organization.

Ultimately, the team borrowed ideas from the principles of pollution prevention, federal government initiatives on alternative power, the "ecological footprint" concept, and information from an organization called The Natural Step. Working from these various principles of sustainability, the EPA Region 8 EMS team created the first three of its guiding principles (shown at left).

Because of EPA's interest in encouraging the use of EMSs, one of the Senior Leadership Team EMS Champions requested that the team add a principle about the region's role as an advocate for EMSs throughout the region it represents.

EPA Region 8 managers are asked to encourage all employees to build these four commitments into how they do their jobs. Region 8 commits to asking the question, "Does this decision meet our guiding principles?" as part of any operation.

At the end of the first EMS cycle, the EMS Team will assess the application of our guiding principles and develop a final Regional Environmental Policy for approval during the top management review.

EPA Region 8 has committed to sharing its successes and lessons learned, thereby improving its own performance and that of others by engaging in a ongoing dialogue. **For more information about Region 8's EMS, please visit <http://www.epa.gov/region8/ems>. Our e-mail address is [r8ems@epa.gov](mailto:r8ems@epa.gov). You can also contact Dianne Thiel at 303 312-6389.**



Glacier National Park, Montana, where glaciers are receding

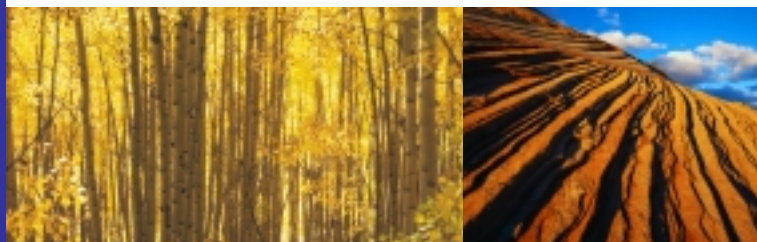
## RESOURCES

EPA Region 8 consulted the following sustainability resources:

- Ecological Footprints: [www.redefiningprogress.org](http://www.redefiningprogress.org)
- The Natural Step: [www.naturalstep.org](http://www.naturalstep.org)
- The Oregon Natural Step Network: [www.ortns.org](http://www.ortns.org)
- Natural Capitalism: [www.naturalcapitalism.org](http://www.naturalcapitalism.org)
- Eco-Effectiveness: [www.mbdc.com](http://www.mbdc.com)
- Article: David Junz, John Klostermann, and Christopher Juniper. "Environmental Sustainability in the Manufacturing Process: Incorporating the Natural Step Principles." Pollution Prevention Review, Autumn, 2000, pages 15-38.

Region 8 **E**mployees  
**M**anaging for  
**S**ustainability

**...all systems green.**



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